



**REPORT TITLE:** Practical Support Grant allocation to VCS, district councils and universities in Gloucestershire for the provision of practical and emotional support for people self isolating as a result of Covid-19

<b>Dates between which decision will be taken</b>	Earliest date: 30 November 2021 Latest date: 17 December 2021
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Tim Harman, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek approval to allocate the Practical Support Grant to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VCS organisations to ensure that provision of practical and emotional support for those self isolating is available in communities across Gloucestershire</li><li>• Gloucestershire University, Hartpury University and the Royal Agricultural University to ensure that they are able to support students to self isolate</li><li>• The six district councils to ensure that they can continue to broker support packages for people self isolating and hold contingency funds to put in place additional support packages as necessary</li></ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>That the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities and delegates authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health to allocate UK subsidy control regime compliant funding from the Practical Support Grant described in the Self Isolation Framework in the following proportions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. £249,980 to VCS organisations for the purpose of funding the provision of practical and emotional support for individuals who are self isolating in communities across Gloucestershire</li><li>2. £66,873 to each of the six District Councils in Gloucestershire for the purpose of brokering support packages for people who are self isolating and also to provide contingency funding for additional support packages that become necessary for people self isolating</li><li>3. £70,000 for University of Gloucestershire, £90,000 for Royal Agricultural University and £110,000 for Hartpury University for the purpose of ensuring that they are each able to provide adequate support for their students that are required to self isolate</li></ol> <p>In view of the possibility that the Department of Health and Social Care may deem it necessary to allocate future Practical Support Grant payments to Gloucestershire County Council for the purposes set out in the Self Isolation Framework, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Public</p>

	<p>Health and Communities:</p> <p>4. delegates authority to the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Public Health to allocate any additional funds, not exceeding £250,000 in value, for the purposes set out in the Self Isolation Framework. The allocation of such funding will be conditional on procurement and legal advice being obtained before it is allocated in order to ensure that it complies with subsidy control regime and public procurement law requirements.</p>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	To seek approval to offer the Practical Support Grant funding to VCS organisations, the 6 District Councils and 3 Universities in Gloucestershire for the purposes set out above and in the main body of this report.
<b>Resource Implications</b>	<i>Gloucestershire County Council has been allocated £921,218 from the Department for Health and Social Care for the provision of practical and emotional support for people required to self isolate as a result of Covid-19</i>
<b>Background Documents</b>	<p>Gloucestershire Outbreak Management Plan  <a href="https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/gloucestershire-covid-19-local-outbreak-management-plan/">https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/gloucestershire-covid-19-local-outbreak-management-plan/</a></p> <p>Self Isolation Framework  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-isolation-practical-support-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-the-voluntary-and-community-sector">Self-isolation practical support: guidance for local authorities and the voluntary and community sector - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p>
<b>Statutory Authority</b>	<p>Government via Local Authority Circular:  Self Isolation Support Framework  Published 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021</p> <p>Determination under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 of a ringfenced Local Authority Practical Support for Self-isolation to local authorities for 2021 to 2022 No.31/5717 (the “<b>Determination</b>”).</p>
<b>Divisional Councillor(s)</b>	All
<b>Officer</b>	<p><b>Any representations should be sent to:</b></p> <p>Name: Mary Peplow  Tel. no: 01452 328442  Email: mary.peplow@gloucestershire.gov.uk</p> <p><b>By 5pm on Monday 29 November 2021</b></p>
<b>Timeline</b>	The funding has been allocated on a monthly basis between March and September 2021.

## Background

1. The Practical Support Grant is for use by councils to provide support to people who have been told to self-isolate to carry out essential tasks or for offering social or emotional support.
2. Practical support funding can only be used to deliver practical, social and emotional support to people who are self-isolating as positive cases or close contacts. This funding cannot be used to deliver financial support.
3. The Local Authority practical support fund is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the varying needs of individual local areas. The funding can be used dynamically and creatively to support self-isolation through practical measures in the most appropriate way locally.
4. The scope of the grant is to support councils in providing a triaging process and a non-financial support package for individuals who are required to self-isolate and need practical, social, or emotional support to do so. For example, in accessing food where they are unable to rely on family, friends or other support networks. Additionally, the grant enables support to people who do not have alternative support networks in carrying out essential tasks and social / emotional support.
5. Funding can be used to deliver direct services or to fund delivery partners, including VCS organisations. It is expected that the funding is used both to respond to an immediate demand and to maintain a contingency support offer, even when demand is low.
6. The grant conditions state that in two tier areas, the grant is conditional on upper tier authorities working closely with their lower tier partners and ensuring those partners are given opportunities to deliver the outcomes this grant is meant to support where delivery by those partners would be the most efficient and cost-effective means of delivery. In those cases, it is essential that upper tier authorities provide sufficient resources to lower tier authorities within the former's allocated funding so that the latter can carry out any responsibilities that they are asked to undertake.
7. In Gloucestershire, people who require support whilst self isolating can request help and support through the Community Help Hub portal or by going directly to their district council. These requests are then processed by the relevant district council. The district council then brokers support from the voluntary and community organisation that is best placed to meet the identified need. Allocating a proportion of the grant to the VCS and district councils will enable this process to continue to work effectively.
8. £250,000 of the funding will be distributed to the VCS through an established grant scheme which exists to ensure that VCS organisations can continue their support for vulnerable people and those at highest risk whilst reinforcing the Covid guidance messages and measures to minimise the spread of disease, with grants to any single organisation not exceeding £20,000 in value.

9. The Universities in Gloucestershire have taken on responsibility for ensuring that their students are able to self isolate when required through the provision of meals and emotional support services. Allocating a proportion of the grant to universities will enable them to continue to provide this service to the student population of Gloucestershire.

## **Options**

### **10. Option 1**

To distribute the funding to the VCS, district councils and universities in Gloucestershire as they are in the best position to offer the required levels of practical and emotional support.

This is the preferred option as it conforms with government guidance and will facilitate appropriate provision of support for those self isolating, which will support the reduction of transmission of Covid 19.

### **11. Option 2**

Not to distribute the funding to Gloucestershire VCS, District councils and universities. This is not recommended as it is both against government guidance and could impede the ability to offer adequate support to those required to self isolate.

## **Risks**

12. Given that support provided to VCS organisations, District Councils and Universities by local authorities using the Practical Support Fund Ring-Fenced Grant may be subject to the UK's international obligations on subsidy control, the council is required comply with relevant subsidy control rules when making allocations of such grant.
13. The council considers that the proposed measures are a proportionate and appropriate means of achieving the specific policy objectives set out in the Self Isolation Framework, namely, to provide practical and emotional support to those need to self-isolate thereby reducing the risk of transmission. It is the council's view that these objectives cannot be readily achieved through other means and on this basis, the risk of the council receiving an order to repay the proposed grant funding under subsidy control rules is considered to be small.
14. There is a risk associated with not providing the proposed grant funding, given that this would reduce the levels of support available to those self isolating and could impede the reduction of transmission of Covid 19

## **Financial implications**

15. All monies to be distributed by the council are from the government's Practical Support Fund only. The total to be distributed in respect of Gloucestershire shall be a sum not exceeding the £921,218 that has been paid to the council under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 of the ringfenced Local Authority Practical Support for Self-isolation to local authorities for 2021 to 2022 No. 31/5717. (The Determination).

### **Climate change implications**

16. Carbon emissions are neutral and the decision is not vulnerable to climate change

### **Equality implications**

17. Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed? Yes  
The impact on all the protected characteristics has been considered and no particular disproportionate impacts were found. The intended beneficiaries of this support could include individuals from across all of the protected characteristics.

18. The Cabinet Member should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment in order to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

### **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications**

19. No data protection implications have been identified

### **Social value implications**

20. n/a

### **Consultation feedback**

21. Discussions have taken place with the VCS, District Councils and Universities to determine the appropriate allocation of the funds.

### **Officer recommendations**

22. It is recommended that the funding is distributed to providers as outlined in Option 1 as a matter of urgency.

### **Performance management/follow-up**

23. The proposed payments will be made under grant agreements which will require providers to submit evidence of spend which will be reviewed to ensure that funds have been spent appropriately.